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CENSUS OF RELIGIOUS BODIES
1926

UNITARIANS

STATISTICS, DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The census of religious bodies, as its name indicates, is a census of religious organizations rather than a census of population classified according to denominational affiliation. This census is taken once in 10 years in accordance with the provisions of the Permanent Census Act approved March 6, 1902, and is confined to churches located in continental United States.

Reports are obtained by the Bureau of the Census from each of the congregations, churches, or other local organizations of each religious body. The census data are thus obtained directly from the local churches and are not in any sense a compilation of the statistics collected by the different denominations and published in their year books. Lists of the local organizations for 1926 have been secured in most cases, however, from the denominational headquarters, and much additional assistance has been rendered by the officials of the various denominational organizations.

The statistics of expenditures relate either to the calendar year 1926 or to the church record year which closed at some time during 1926, and the figures for membership, value of property, etc., relate to the close of that year.

Number of churches.—In the reports of the Census of Religious Bodies for 1916 and 1906 the total number of churches or organizations shown for some denominations was slightly in excess of the number of churches reporting membership. Since membership figures have been obtained for all of the churches included in the reports for the current year, and for other reasons, it has seemed advisable to use for purposes of comparison with 1926 the number of churches reporting membership in 1916 and 1906. These figures are used, therefore, in the tables presenting comparative figures for earlier censuses.

Membership.—The members of a local church organization, and thus of the denomination to which the church belongs, are those persons who are recognized as constituent parts of the organization. The exact definition of membership depends upon the constitution and practice of the church or denomination under consideration. Each church was instructed to report the number of its members according to the definition of member used in that particular church or organization. In some religious bodies the term "member" is applied only to communicants, while in others it includes all baptized persons, and in still other bodies it covers all enrolled persons.

Separate figures are shown for members under 13 years of age and those 13 years of age and over. The membership 13 years of age and over usually affords a better basis for comparison between denominations reporting membership on a different basis.

Urban and rural churches.—Urban churches are those located in cities or other incorporated places which had 2,500 inhabitants or more on January 1, 1920, the date of the last Federal census. Rural churches, in accordance with the census definition, are those located in territory outside such incorporated places.

Church edifices.—A church edifice is a building used mainly for religious services and owned wholly or in part by the organization so using it.

Value of church property.—The term "value of church property" has been used in the reports of the Census of Religious Bodies, at least from 1890 to 1916, inclusive, in a very restricted sense, excluding (1) the value of investment property, (2) the value of parsonages or pastors' residences, and (3) the value

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of school buildings, parish halls, monasteries, and other property which, while owned and used in some way by the church organization, was used for purposes not directly connected with church services.

In this bulletin, in order to avoid any uncertainty as to what is included, the term "value of church edifices" has been substituted for the term "value of church property," which was used in the earlier reports. The figures are strictly comparable, however, the new term covering exactly the same class of property as the old.

The "value of church edifices" comprises the estimated value of the church buildings owned and used for worship by the organizations reporting, together with the value of the land on which these buildings stand and the furniture, organs, bells, and other equipment owned by the churches and actually used in connection with church services. Where parts of a church building are used for social or educational work in connection with the church, the whole value of the building and its equipment is included, as it has been found practically impossible to make a proper separation in such cases.

The value of the parsonages or pastors' residences is shown as a separate item, where the ownership of such buildings is reported by the churches.

Debt.—The debt shown in connection with the data on church edifices and parsonages is for the most part secured by real estate mortgage or other claim on the property concerned. The summary tables show not only the amount of debt reported and the number of churches reporting a specific debt, but also the number of churches reporting that they had no debt. The whole number of churches reporting with regard to debt, including the two groups just mentioned, is in most cases nearly equal to the number reporting the value of church edifices or parsonages, respectively.

Expenditures.—The amount expended by the churches during their last fiscal year is separated in the reports received for most of the churches into two parts, comprising (1) current expenses and improvements, and (2) benevolences, missions, etc. These figures indicate in a general way the distribution of the church expenditures between the requirements of local self-support and the contributions of the church to larger interests. The items called for, as they appeared on the schedule, were as follows:

Amount expended for salaries, repairs, and other running expenses; for improvements or new buildings; and for payments on church debt	$----------
Amount expended for benevolences, including home and foreign missions; for denominational support; and for all other purposes	$----------
Total expenditures during year	$----------

Averages.—The average number of members per church is obtained by dividing the total membership by the total number of churches shown. The average value of property and the average expenditure per church are obtained by dividing the total value of property and the total expend tures, respectively, by the number of churches reporting in each case.

Sunday schools.—The Sunday schools for which figures are presented in this bulletin are those maintained by the churches of the denomination to which the bulletin relates, including in some cases mission schools or other Sunday schools conducted by the church elsewhere than in the main church edifice. The statistics given relate to Sunday schools only and do not include the week-day schools that are maintained by a number of denominations.

UNITARIANS

STATISTICS

Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.—A general summary of the statistics for the Unitarians for the year 1926 is presented in Table 1, which shows also the distribution of these figures between urban and rural territory.

The membership of the Unitarian denomination comprises those persons who are enrolled as members on the records of the local churches, there being some variation in the requirements and practice of the different local organizations. In general, the membership is limited to adults, as indicated by the very small number of persons under 13 years of age included in the total.

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: UNITARIANS

ITEM	Total	In urban territory [1]	In rural territory [1]	PER CENT OF TOTAL [2]	
				Urban	Rural
Churches (local organizations)	353	296	57	83.9	16.1
Members	60,152	55,445	4,707	92.2	7.8
Average per church	170	187	83		
Membership by sex:					
Male	22,748	20,908	1,840	91.9	8.1
Female	32,453	29,819	2,634	91.9	8.1
Sex not reported	4,951	4,718	233	95.3	4.7
Males per 100 females	70.1	70.1	69.9		
Membership by age:					
Under 13 years	595	424	171	71.3	28.7
13 years and over	57,373	52,869	4,504	92.1	7.9
Age not reported	2,184	2,152	32	98.5	1.5
Per cent under 13 years [3]	1.0	0.8	3.7		
Church edifices:					
Number	388	326	62	84.0	16.0
Value—Churches reporting	337	281	56	83.4	16.6
Amount reported	$27,713,554	$26,473,654	$1,239,900	95.5	4.5
Average per church	$82,236	$94,212	$22,141		
Debt—Churches reporting	72	64	8		
Amount reported	$1,172,920	$1,163,420	$9,500	99.2	0.8
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice	235	193	42	82.1	17.9
Parsonages:					
Value—Churches reporting	143	110	33	76.9	23.1
Amount reported	$1,485,953	$1,301,253	$184,700	87.6	12.4
Debt—Churches reporting	23	21	2		
Amount reported	$97,990	$94,800	$3,190	96.7	3.3
Churches reporting "no debt" on parsonage	107	80	27	74.8	25.2
Expenditures during year:					
Churches reporting	344	290	54	84.3	15.7
Amount reported	$3,418,975	$3,276,692	$142,283	95.8	4.2
Current expenses and improvements	$3,120,816	$2,991,411	$129,405	95.9	4.1
Benevolences, missions, etc	$255,759	$242,881	$12,878	95.0	5.0
Not classified	$42,400	$42,400		100.0	
Average expenditure per church	$9,939	$11,299	$2,635		
Sunday schools:					
Churches reporting	317	271	46	85.5	14.5
Officers and teachers	3,025	2,716	309	89.8	10.2
Scholars	19,722	17,829	1,893	90.4	9.6

[1] Urban territory includes all cities and other incorporated places which had 2,500 inhabitants or more in 1920, the date of the last Federal census; rural territory comprises the remainder of the country.

[2] Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

[3] Based on membership with age classification reported.

The data presented in this bulletin for 1926 represent 353 active Unitarian churches, with 60,152 members. These figures are exclusive of 18 federated churches, each consisting of a Unitarian unit combined with a unit of some other denomination. These federated churches, which are more or less closely affiliated with the Unitarian denomination, reported a total membership of 2,838. Reports were also received concerning 45 Unitarian churches that were said to be dormant or discontinued or holding summer services only. The churches holding summer services only were omitted from the tabulation because their members are already included for the most part in the membership of churches at their places of permanent residence.

The classification of membership by sex was reported by 338 churches and the classification by age was reported by 344 churches, including, however, only 34 which reported any members under 13 years of age.

Comparative data, 1890–1926.—Table 2 presents, in convenient form for comparison, a summary of the available statistics of this denomination for the censuses of 1926, 1916, 1906, and 1890. In connection with the 1916 and earlier censuses some of the churches reported constituency in place of membership. As a result, the membership figures for the earlier censuses are somewhat too large for fair comparison with the 1926 data, which include actual membership only.

TABLE 2.—COMPARATIVE SUMMARY, 1890 TO 1926: UNITARIANS

ITEM	1926	1916	1906	1890
Churches (local organizations)	353	411	435	421
Increase [1] over preceding census:				
Number	−58	−24	14	----
Per cent	−14.1	−5.5	3.3	----
Members	60,152	82,515	70,542	67,749
Increase over preceding census:				
Number	([2])	11,973	2,793	----
Per cent	----	17.0	4.1	----
Average membership per church	170	201	162	161
Church edifices:				
Number	388	399	463	424
Value—Churches reporting	337	393	406	----
Amount reported	$27,713,554	$15,247.349	$14,263,277	$10,335,100
Average per church	$82,236	$38,797	$35,131	----
Debt—Churches reporting	72	93	85	----
Amount reported	$1,172,920	$447,174	$332,330	----
Parsonages:				
Value—Churches reporting	143	129	115	----
Amount reported	$1,485,953	$819,912	$584,750	----
Debt—Churches reporting	23	----	----	----
Amount reported	$97,990	----	----	----
Expenditures during year:				
Churches reporting	344	369	----	----
Amount reported	$3,418,975	$1,485,556	----	----
Current expenses and improvements	$3,120,816	$1,184,242	----	----
Benevolences, missions, etc	$255,759	$181,033	----	----
Not classified	$42,400	$120,281	----	----
Average expenditure per church	$9,939	$4,026	----	----
Sunday schools:				
Churches reporting	317	331	358	----
Officers and teachers	3,025	3,064	3,592	----
Scholars	19,722	19,675	24,005	----

[1] A minus sign (−) denotes decrease.

[2] Since the 1916 figures include the constituency of some churches, reported in place of membership, and are therefore not strictly comparable with the 1926 membership, no increase or decrease is shown.

State tables.—Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 present the statistics for the Unitarians by States. Table 3 gives for each State the number and membership of the churches classified according to their location in urban or rural territory and the

total membership classified by sex. Table 4 gives for selected States the number and membership of the churches for the three censuses from 1906 to 1926, together with the membership for 1926 classified as under 13 years of age and 13 years of age and over. Table 5 shows the value of church property and the debt on such property, for 1926 alone. Table 6 presents, for 1926, the church expenditures, showing separately the amounts expended for current expenses and improvements, and for benevolences, etc., and also gives the data for Sunday schools. Separate presentation in Tables 5 and 6 is limited to those States in which three or more churches reported the principal items shown (values or expenditures), in order to avoid disclosing the financial statistics of any individual church. The States omitted from these tables can be determined by referring to the complete list which appears in Table 3.

TABLE 3.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, AND TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX, BY STATES, 1926: UNITARIANS

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX			
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Sex not reported	Males per 100 females [1]
United States	**353**	**296**	**57**	**60,152**	**55,445**	**4,707**	**22,748**	**32,453**	**4,951**	**70.1**
New England:										
Maine	14	9	5	1,731	1,303	428	678	1,053	----	64.4
New Hampshire	21	15	6	2,222	1,844	378	833	1,274	115	65.4
Vermont	3	3	----	495	495	----	176	319	----	55.2
Massachusetts	159	122	37	28,203	24,877	3,326	10,753	16,449	1,001	65.4
Rhode Island	3	3	----	750	750	----	320	430	----	74.4
Connecticut	2	1	1	128	118	10	53	75	----	----
Middle Atlantic:										
New York	26	25	1	5,144	5,096	48	1,180	1,594	2,370	74.0
New Jersey	10	10	----	1,053	1,053	----	372	531	150	70.1
Pennsylvania	7	7	----	1,593	1,593	----	647	849	97	76.2
East North Central:										
Ohio	7	7	----	2,704	2,704	----	773	713	1,218	108.4
Indiana	2	2	----	538	538	----	260	278	----	93.5
Illinois	15	15	----	2,489	2,489	----	1,245	1,244	----	100.1
Michigan	4	4	----	634	634	----	249	385	----	64.7
Wisconsin	2	2	----	377	377	----	154	223	----	69.1
West North Central:										
Minnesota	9	5	4	1,760	1,347	413	845	915	----	92.3
Iowa	6	5	1	1,162	1,082	80	488	674	----	72.4
Missouri	3	3	----	1,058	1,058	----	434	624	----	69.6
Nebraska	2	2	----	427	427	----	176	251	----	70.1
Kansas	3	3	----	374	374	----	162	212	----	76.4
South Atlantic:										
Delaware	1	1	----	125	125	----	50	75	----	----
Maryland	1	1	----	244	244	----	95	149	----	63.8
District of Columbia	1	1	----	480	480	----	160	320	----	50.0
Virginia	3	3	----	250	250	----	121	129	----	93.8
West Virginia	1	1	----	41	41	----	15	26	----	----
North Carolina	2	----	2	24	----	24	12	12	----	----
South Carolina	1	1	----	75	75	----	29	46	----	----
Florida	2	2	----	147	147	----	59	88	----	----
East South Central:										
Kentucky	2	2	----	481	481	----	224	257	----	87.2
Tennessee	4	4	----	259	259	----	122	137	----	89.1
West South Central:										
Louisiana	1	1	----	183	183	----	69	114	----	60.5
Oklahoma	3	3	----	271	271	----	126	145	----	86.9
Texas	3	3	----	282	282	----	138	144	----	95.8
Mountain:										
Montana	1	1	----	18	18	----	8	10	----	----
Colorado	3	3	----	450	450	----	208	242	----	86.0
Utah	1	1	----	116	116	----	43	73	----	----
Pacific:										
Washington	3	3	----	510	510	----	211	299	----	70.6
Oregon	3	3	----	670	670	----	238	432	----	55.1
California	19	19	----	2,684	2,684	----	1,022	1,662	----	61.5

[1] Ratio not shown where number of females is less than 100.

TABLE 4.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, 1906 TO 1926, AND MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926, BY STATES: UNITARIANS

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches in either 1926, 1916, or 1906]

STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926			
	1926	1916	1906	1926	1916	1906	Under 13 years	13 years and over	Age not reported	Per cent under 13 [1]
United States	**353**	**411**	**435**	**60,152**	**82,515**	**70,542**	**595**	**57,373**	**2,184**	**1.0**
Maine	14	18	23	1,731	2,488	2,762	34	1,697	-------	2.0
New Hampshire	21	22	25	2,222	3,890	3,629	33	2,189	-------	1.5
Vermont	3	6	7	495	1,833	710	------	495	-------	------
Massachusetts	159	179	180	28,203	41,587	35,440	430	26,662	1,111	1.6
Rhode Island	3	3	6	750	1,412	1,406	------	750	-------	------
Connecticut	2	4	5	128	316	446	------	128	-------	------
New York	26	26	21	5,144	6,288	4,656	------	4,834	310	------
New Jersey	10	12	9	1,053	1,291	934	------	1,053	-------	------
Pennsylvania	7	9	13	1,593	1,828	1,596	------	1,593	-------	------
Ohio	7	6	7	2,704	1,700	1,228	------	2,704	-------	------
Indiana	2	2	4	538	376	253	10	528	-------	1.9
Illinois	15	17	19	2,489	1,593	2,339	41	2,448	-------	1.6
Michigan	4	7	13	634	1,478	1,452	------	634	-------	------
Wisconsin	2	4	8	377	508	919	------	377	-------	------
Minnesota	9	10	10	1,760	1,898	1,160	20	1,740	-------	1.1
Iowa	6	7	13	1,162	1,004	1,482	------	1,162	-------	------
Missouri	3	3	3	1,058	911	482	2	1,056	-------	0.2
Nebraska	2	2	4	427	549	403	------	427	-------	------
Kansas	3	3	4	374	258	345	------	374	-------	------
Virginia	3	5	2	250	235	76	------	250	-------	------
North Carolina	2	5	4	24	994	122	4	20	-------	------
Florida	2	6	2	147	184	105	------	147	-------	------
Tennessee	4	2	2	259	124	95	------	259	-------	------
Oklahoma	3	1	1	271	100	70	1	270	-------	0.4
Texas	3	3	2	282	414	118	2	280	-------	0.7
Montana	1	4	3	18	375	437	------	18	-------	------
Colorado	3	5	6	450	638	723	------	450	-------	------
Washington	3	5	4	510	2,176	553	------	510	-------	------
Oregon	3	4	3	670	532	667	------	670	-------	------
California	19	21	19	2,684	3,343	3,204	18	1,903	763	0.9
Other States	9	10	13	1,745	2,192	2,730	------	1,745	-------	------

[1] Based on membership with age classification reported; not shown where base is less than 100.

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION [1]

DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY

Unitarianism may be defined in the most general terms as the religious doctrine of those holding belief in one God in one person (as distinguished from the Trinitarian belief in one God in three persons) and the related belief in the strict humanity of Jesus (as contrasted with the belief in His Deity). While Unitarians assert that these beliefs were held in the first Christian centuries, before ever the Trinitarian dogmas were developed, yet the Unitarianism of to-day originated historically in the first half century of the Protestant Reformation. In one form or another it was espoused in the sixteenth century by a number of Anabaptist leaders and by numerous independent thinkers in Italy or Switzerland.

[1] This statement, which is substantially the same as that published in Part II of the Report on Religious Bodies, 1916, has been revised by Rev. Elmer S. Forbes, editor of the Unitarian Year Book, and approved by him in its present form.

TABLE 5.—VALUE OF CHURCH PROPERTY, AND CHURCH DEBT, BY STATES, 1926: UNITARIANS

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches reporting value of property]

STATE	Total number of churches	Number of church edifices	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		DEBT ON CHURCH EDIFICES		VALUE OF PARSONAGES		DEBT ON PARSONAGES	
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount
United States	**353**	**388**	**337**	**$27,713,554**	**72**	**$1,172,920**	**143**	**$1,485,953**	**23**	**$97,990**
Maine	14	15	14	492,000	2	5,400	9	57,500	1	250
New Hampshire	21	26	21	729,400	3	6,100	9	92,500	-----	-----
Vermont	3	3	3	190,000	-----	-----	2	28,000	1	2,000
Massachusetts	159	189	156	13,426,754	28	145,920	79	774,953	10	37,790
Rhode Island	3	4	3	290,000	1	4,600	2	23,500	-----	-----
New York	26	23	22	3,436,000	9	257,450	7	71,500	3	21,000
New Jersey	10	12	9	347,000	2	2,653	2	13,000	2	2,750
Pennsylvania	7	8	7	951,000	2	4,825	6	143,000	1	3,000
Ohio	7	7	7	976,000	4	136,500	1	8,000	-----	-----
Illinois	15	15	14	1,344,000	6	333,622	3	33,000	1	5,200
Michigan	4	3	3	420,000	-----	-----	1	15,000	-----	-----
Minnesota	9	10	9	454,500	4	8,000	3	12,000	-----	-----
Iowa	6	6	6	265,000	-----	-----	3	25,000	-----	-----
Missouri	3	3	3	325,000	2	24,000	-----	-----	-----	-----
Kansas	3	3	3	80,000	1	4,000	1	5,000	-----	-----
Tennessee	4	3	3	87,500	1	5,850	1	10,000	-----	-----
Texas	3	3	3	102,000	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Colorado	3	3	3	185,000	1	1,200	-----	-----	-----	-----
Oregon	3	3	3	246,500	-----	-----	2	6,500	-----	-----
California	19	20	18	1,023,500	2	34,500	2	11,000	-----	-----
Other States	31	29	27	2,342,400	4	198,300	10	156,500	4	26,000

Its most influential leaders on the Continent, where it was variously known as Arianism, Socinianism, or Unitarianism, were Michael Servetus in Switzerland, Faustus Socinus in Poland, and Francis David in Transylvania.

In England Unitarianism gradually developed during the eighteenth century, largely under Socinian influences, and chiefly among the Presbyterian churches, though there were also important accessions from other religious bodies. While such men as Newton, Locke, Milton, and Penn in the seventeenth century are known to have held Unitarian views, no movement toward a distinct denomination began till late in the eighteenth century; and the most distinguished leaders of Unitarianism since its separate organization have been Joseph Priestley, Theophilus Lindsey, and James Martineau.

In America Unitarianism developed out of New England Congregationalism, whose churches had as a rule unwittingly left the way open for doctrinal changes, by requiring members upon joining the church simply to join in a covenant, rather than to subscribe to a creed. Thus many of the Congregational churches of eastern Massachusetts, including nearly all the oldest and most important ones, gradually moved far toward Unitarian beliefs in the second half of the eighteenth century, though the first church distinctly to avow such beliefs was the Episcopal King's Chapel at Boston, in 1785. These churches preferred to call themselves simply Liberal Christians, and the name Unitarian was only slowly and reluctantly accepted.

TABLE 6.—CHURCH EXPENDITURES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926: UNITARIANS

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches reporting expenditures]

STATE	Total number of churches	EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR					SUNDAY SCHOOLS		
		Churches reporting	Total amount	For current expenses and improvements	For benevolences, missions, etc.	Not classified	Churches reporting	Officers and teachers	Scholars
United States	**353**	**344**	**$3,418,975**	**$3,120,816**	**$255,759**	**$42,400**	**317**	**3,025**	**19,722**
Maine	14	14	66,886	62,361	4,525	----	13	116	746
New Hampshire	21	20	132,061	120,411	8,950	2,700	17	126	836
Vermont	3	3	17,216	15,452	1,764	----	3	30	205
Massachusetts	159	154	1,463,612	1,316,702	142,310	4,600	149	1,554	10,209
Rhode Island	3	3	35,930	30,877	5,053	----	2	32	213
New York	26	25	303,974	286,156	17,818	----	22	196	1,053
New Jersey	10	10	52,891	50,537	2,354	----	10	84	418
Pennsylvania	7	7	83,549	69,387	14,162	----	7	58	477
Ohio	7	7	208,989	173,681	3,308	32,000	7	92	738
Illinois	15	15	470,659	467,529	3,130	----	13	77	416
Michigan	4	3	25,426	23,793	1,633	----	3	37	215
Minnesota	9	9	43,123	41,321	1,802	----	7	61	443
Iowa	6	6	28,218	27,399	819	----	6	65	337
Missouri	3	3	52,020	41,893	10,127	----	3	43	286
Kansas	3	3	15,143	12,170	2,973	----	3	23	131
Virginia	3	3	33,727	33,152	575	----	2	12	70
Tennessee	4	4	12,390	12,055	335	----	4	14	123
Texas	3	3	21,128	12,128	9,000	----	2	6	33
Colorado	3	3	15,557	14,402	1,155	----	3	23	175
Washington	3	3	13,915	13,255	660	----	2	12	63
Oregon	3	3	19,485	14,556	1,829	3,100	3	31	234
California	19	19	129,754	121,187	8,567	----	14	132	960
Other States	25	24	173,322	160,412	12,910	----	22	201	1,341

The formation of a new denomination out of the liberal wing of the Congregational Church was a gradual process, which went on in one congregation after another. The cleavage was hastened by the election of Henry Ware, a liberal, as professor of theology at Harvard University in 1805, in spite of orthodox protests, and by the fastening of the name Unitarian upon the liberals by the conservatives in 1815, after which the former were more and more refused religious fellowship by the latter, who desired thus to exclude them from the denomination. At length, in 1819, William Ellery Channing, of Boston, acknowledged leader of the liberals, preached at Baltimore an ordination sermon which defined and defended the views held by Unitarians and was thenceforth accepted by them as their platform.

In 1825 the American Unitarian Association was formed to do aggressive missionary work and to promote the interests of the churches concerned, and thus the new denomination became organized separately. The Unitarians of this period were much averse to fostering sectarian spirit. They had been only loosely welded together, and their own fundamental principles were not clearly settled; so that for nearly 40 years the denomination was stagnant and was divided and weakened by internal controversy centering mainly about the question of miracles. But by the end of the Civil War this controversy had been largely outgrown; a national conference was organized in 1865, and a period of rapid extension and of aggressive denominational life ensued, which has continued down to the present time. For a generation past emphasis has been laid much less upon doctrinal points than upon personal religion, moral advancement, and civic and social reform.

DOCTRINE

The Unitarians have never adopted a creed and do not require of members or ministers profession of a particular doctrine.

The constitution of the General Conference stated simply that "These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding in accordance with His teaching that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man." The declared object of the American Unitarian Association is "to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity." And the covenant most generally used in local churches reads: "In the love of truth, and in the spirit of Jesus, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man."

The most distinguishing marks of Unitarianism to-day are its insistence upon absolute freedom in belief, its reliance upon the supreme guidance of reason, its tolerance of difference in religious opinion, its devotion to education and philanthropy, and its emphasis upon character, as the principles of fundamental importance in religion. There is, however, a general consensus upon the unipersonality of God, the strict humanity of Jesus, the essential dignity and perfectibility of human nature, the natural character of the Bible, and the hope for the ultimate salvation of all souls, in distinction from the views traditionally taught on these points.

ORGANIZATION

The Unitarians are congregational in polity, each congregation being entirely independent of all the others. But for purposes of fellowship, mutual counsel, and the promotion of common ends, they unite in local or State conferences, in the American Unitarian Association, into which the General Conference was merged in 1925, and in an international congress formed "to open communication with those in all lands who are striving to unite pure religion and perfect liberty, and to increase fellowship and cooperation among them." Besides the national missionary organization, the American Unitarian Association, with headquarters at Boston, and offices at New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, other national organizations include the General Alliance of Unitarian Women, the Unitarian Sunday School Society, the Young People's Religious Union, the Laymen's League, the Unitarian Temperance Society, etc.

WORK

The missionary work of the churches of the Unitarian fellowship is carried on chiefly by the American Unitarian Association. In 1926 this association acknowledged receipts amounting to $346,390, which amount was expended in the support of new churches; for circuit preachers; for books and tracts; for assistance to theological students; and for educational work in certain selected schools and communities, not necessarily under Unitarian control. The property (endowment) amounts to approximately $5,700,000. In addition to the work done by the association, home missionary work is carried on also by the Women's General Alliance, the Unitarian Laymen's League, the Young People's Religious Union, and the district and State conferences.

The foreign work of the Unitarian churches is conducted chiefly through the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Thinkers and Workers. The international council has correspondents in all countries, and through them and such organizations as the Japanese Unitarian Association, the Hungarian Consistory, the Brahmo-Somaj of India, and the various liberal Christian bodies in Europe, it carries on active propaganda.

Unitarians are profound believers in education, but not in sectarian educatio
Many leading schools and universities are practically under Unitarian admini
tration, but not one of them is sectarian in purpose or spirit. The Unitaria
ministry is educated chiefly in three theological seminaries—the Harvard Divinit
School, founded in 1819; the Meadville Theological School, established in Penn
sylvania in 1844 and moved to Chicago, Ill., in 1926; and the Pacific Schoo
opened at Berkeley, Calif., in 1904; but in none of these are either teachers o
students ever submitted to dogmatic tests. They have been described as "un
denominational schools of rational theology." For general educational institu
tions large sums of money have been given by Unitarians, but no record is kep
of such gifts. The same may be said in regard to philanthropic movements, s
hospitals, asylums, and the like.

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